



News for Immediate Release

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**DWR Plans Special Events During
Water Awareness Month In May**

The Department of Water Resources plans special events and outreach during the traditional May observance of Water Awareness Month. During May, water agencies in California draw attention to water's vital role for California's people, economy, agriculture, wildlife, and environment. The message is: "Use Water Wisely."

DWR is a leading water resource management and planning agency in California. DWR operates California's State Water Project, the nation's largest State-run multipurpose water and power system. The SWP provides a supplemental water supply for 23 million Californians and irrigation water for about 750,000 acres of farmland.

Three DWR Special Events in May

Three Water Awareness Month special events, encouraging wise use of water, are scheduled at SWP facilities during May.

On **May 10**, free bus tours will be given to Oroville Dam in Butte County, as part of the Oroville community's Feather Fiesta Days celebration.

On **May 15**, Kern County students will visit Edmonston Pumping Plant south of Bakersfield.

On **May 17**, young anglers will take part in a traditional fishing day near San Luis Reservoir near Los Banos.

In addition, DWR, during May, encourages the traveling public to visit its three Visitor Centers. They are located at: Lake Oroville, about 75 miles north of Sacramento, via State

Highways 70 or 99; San Luis Reservoir off State Highway 152, just west of Interstate 5 in Merced County; and Pyramid Lake in northern Los Angeles County, just off Interstate 5, south of Gorman. Open daily and free to the public, these visitor centers offer displays, photos and information about the SWP and its role in meeting California's water needs.

Below are details on these three special events, and contact numbers for more information:

Oroville Dam Bus Tours

On May 10, four bus tours of Oroville Dam will be conducted, one each at 1, 2, 3 and 4 pm.

Oroville Dam, tallest in the nation, is a key Northern California facility for the SWP. Completed in 1967, the dam created Lake Oroville, with a storage capacity of 3.5 million acre-feet.

Each bus tour will take about 45 minutes. Tours will originate in downtown Oroville at Montgomery and Oak streets, and include a ride across the crest of the dam, with a sweeping view of the upper Sacramento Valley. A tour guide will be aboard each bus.

Persons wishing more information about the Oroville bus tours may call the DWR's Oroville Field Division headquarters at (530) 534-2303.

Student Visit at Edmonston

Almost 150 students from five schools in Kern County on May 15 will be special invited guests at DWR's Edmonston Pumping Plant at the foot of the Tehachapi Mountains, south of Bakersfield. This Water Awareness Day visit by students from schools in Kern County is a tradition sponsored by DWR's San Joaquin Field Division, which operates the plant. Edmonston pumps water nearly 2,000 feet up and over the Tehachapi range for use in Southern California.

Student visitors have been invited from the following schools: Elk Hills School in Tupman, Di Giorgio School in Arvin, Maricopa Elementary School in Maricopa, Garden School in Bakersfield, and Taft Primary School in Taft.

This event will feature water safety and water conservation demonstrations, plus catch and release fishing.

More information is available by calling Tom Madden in DWR's San Joaquin Field Division at (661) 858-5500.

Kids' Fishing Day Near San Luis

On Saturday, May 17, the 14th annual Kids' Fishing Day will be held at San Luis Creek State Recreation Area's South Beach on O'Neill Forebay, near San Luis Reservoir. This event is hosted by DWR, California State Department of Parks and Recreation staff, and

volunteers. It is financed in part by the Four Rivers Natural History Association, along with contributions from regional merchants and individuals.

O'Neill Forebay is noted for enjoyable angling, especially for striped bass.

Young anglers (15 and younger) may sign in, starting at 8 am, with prizes awarded at noon. Youths taking part can have their pictures taken and will receive a tackle box, lunch and a small trophy cup. Bait is provided. The event will include a fishing simulator, nature walks, fish print-making, and targets for casting practice. Local merchants have donated door prizes

San Luis Reservoir, largest offstream storage reservoir in the nation, holds more than 2 million acre-feet of water. Both the SWP and the federal Central Valley Project use it. To reach the fishing event site at San Luis Creek South Beach, take State Highway 152 about seven miles west of Interstate 5. Take the San Luis Creek turnoff from State Highway 152 at O'Neill Forebay. Follow signs to the event.

For more information, call Eva McClelland, a DWR guide at San Luis Reservoir, at (209) 827-535.

Water Awareness Month Outreach

DWR will also participate in a variety of other special and community events as part of the May observance of Water Awareness Month. These events are listed below by region, from North to South:

Northern California

ACWA Spring Conference---At the May 7-9 Spring Conference of the Association of California Water Agencies at South Lake Tahoe, DWR will feature an exhibit promoting summer recreation at its storage reservoirs, including Lake Oroville and others in the SWP system.

San Joaquin Valley

Bakersfield Street Fair---Starting in May, and held the third Thursday each month through August, San Joaquin Field Division staff will provide a water information booth in the Bakersfield Street Fair. The DWR booth will promote water safety and water conservation, featuring a wheel spin game and DWR messages about water.

Southern California

(For additional information on the events, listed below, please contact Kathy Simmons at DWR's Vista del Lago Visitors Center, at 661-294-0219.)

Antelope Valley Flea Market---DWR employees from the Southern Field

Division will staff a water booth at the 75th Semi-Annual Flea Market on Sunday, May 4 at the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds in Lancaster, from 9 am to 4 pm. Prizes and pencil packets will be given out, promoting water safety along the SWP. The event includes live music and a car show.

Irvine Water Festival---On May 6 and 7, DWR will take part in the 2003 Children's Water Festival in Irvine, offering a Water Safety Bingo game. The Irvine event is one of the larger water education festivals held in the nation.

Palmdale Water Festival---On May 17-18, from 9 am to 4 pm, Southern Field Division staff will take part in Palmdale Water District's Seventh Annual Fair and Festival. The fishing simulator will be open for use by visiting anglers. Event attractions include live music, pancake breakfast, pony rides, a talent show, and a birds of prey exhibit.

Castaic Lake Open House---On May 17, from 10 am to 3 pm, DWR staff from Southern Field Division will take part in the Castaic Lake Water Agency Annual Open House, in the Rio Vista Water Conservatory Garden in Santa Clarita. DWR employees will assist children in designing water conservation and water safety badges. This free community event publicizes wise use of water.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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